

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 24695

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, UG

SUBJECT: UGANDAN-FRENCH RELATIONS

1. ACCORDING TO QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA COMBAL, DURING HER LUNCHEON WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES OCTOBER 17, UGANDAN FOREIGN MINISTER ELIZABETH BAGAYA RAISED PRIMARILY BILATERAL QUESTIONS OF AN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL NATURE. FRENCH SUPPORT FOR AN EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT WAS DISCUSSED AND IT WAS AGREED THAT RENAULT WOULD PREPARE A STUDY ON THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT IN UGANDA OF A PLANT TO ASSEMBLE CARS FOR SALE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. COMBAL THOUGHT THE RENAULT PROJECT WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO RIPEN IF, IN FACT, IT EVER GETS UNDERWAY. WHILE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR UGANDAN STUDENTS IN FRANCE WERE DISCUSSED, NO MENTION WAS MADE OF THE NOW ALMOST DEAD PROJECT FOR A FRENCH TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE IN UGANDA.

2. COMBAL SAID THAT PRINCESS ELEIZABETH SPOKE OF NEITHER THE MIDDLE EAST NOR SOUTH AFRICA WITH SAUVAGNARGUES. SHE WAS QUICKLY CUT OFF WHEN SHE EXPRESSED THE VIEW
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THAT FRANCE SHOULD GIVE IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE TO THE

FTAI AND THE COMOROS, WITH SAUVAGNARGUES FORCEFULLY
RESTATING THE FRENCH POSITION ON THESE MATTERS.
COMBAL INDICATED THAT SHE ASKED FOR NO MILITARY EQUIP-
MENT. HE COMMENTED THAT DURING THE PAST YEAR WHILE THE
SOVIETS HAVE BECOME AGAIN UGANDA'S PRINCIPAL ARMS
SUPPLIER, THE UGANDANS HAVE NOT RENEWED EARLIER REQUESTS
FOR FRENCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE, REQUESTS WHICH THE
FRENCH HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO FULFILL EXCEPT FOR A FEW
SPARE PARTS FOR THE MAGISTERS PROVIDED BY ISRAEL.

3. COMBAL OBSERVED THAT WHILE FRANCO-UGANDAN RELATIONS
ARE FAIRLY GOOD, THE FRENCH CONTINUE TO BE WARY OF THE
"TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE" AMIN, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS
SYMPATHY OF THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN KAMPALA FOR THE
GENERAL. THE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT IT IS USEFUL TO
MAINTAIN A WESTERN PRESENCE IN UGANDA, HE SAID,
ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE CLEARLY INCREASING INFLUENCE
OF THE SOVIETS THERE. HE LAID THE SOVIET INTEREST IN
UGANDA MORE TO A DESIRE TO COUNTER THE CHINESE IN EAST
AFRICA THAN TO ANY SERIOUS INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING A
STRONG SOVIET POSITION IN UGANDA AS SUCH.

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